

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03502 201704Z

21

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3471

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWATI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USDEL ASWAN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3502

ASWAN FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PLO IS XF

SUBJ: PLO TESTS THE WATER ON COEXISTENCE WITH ISRAEL

1. BEIRUT PRESS YESTERDAY CARRIED SNATCHES, BASED ON ACCOUNTS IN REUTHERS AND LONDON TIMES, OF PROPOSAL BY SAID HAMMAMI, PLO REP IN LONDON, FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PALESTINIAN STATE. HAMMAMI'S PLAN REPORTEDLY PUBLISHED IN MAR ISSUE OF MAGAZINE, MIDDLE EAST INTERNATIONAL, WHICH WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN.

2. WHILE STATING THAT PLO'S ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE REMAINS "STATE OF PARTNERSHIP" EMBRACING ENTIRE AREA OF OLD PALESTINE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 03502 201704Z

HAMMAMI CAST DOUBT ON EFFICACY OF ARMED STRUGGLE TO ATTAIN

THIS GOAL. HE BELIEVED THAT IF CURRENT SETTLEMENT EFFORTS RESULT IN "ESTABLISHMENT OF SOME KIND OF PALESTINIAN STATE ON TERRITORY RECOVERED FROM ISRAEL" (ONE LOCAL ACCOUNT SAYS HE INDICATED WEST BANK AND GAZA BUT DID NOT MENTION JERUSALEM SPECIFICALLY), PLO COULD PURSUE ULTIMATE "DREAM" OF SECULAR STATE BY NON-VIOLENT AND EVOLUTIONARY MEANS. BY DEVELOPING PALESTINIAN MINI-STATE TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LEVEL OF ISRAEL AND BY CARRYING ON DIALOGUE WITH OPEN-MINDED ISRAELIS, HAMMAMI SUGGESTED THAT SOME FORM OF "MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE COEXISTENCE MIGHT IN TIME BE DEVELOPED BETWEEN TWO PEOPLES LIVING IN THE COUNTRY WHICH THEY BOTH CLAIM."

3. COMMENT: BASED ON FRAGMENTS AVAILABLE HERE, HAMMAMI'S ARTICLE APPEARS REPRESENT MOST FORTHRIGHT EXPOSITION OF PLO MINIMALIST POSITION (ALBEIT CLOAKED IN MAXIMALIST PALESTINIAN MYTHOLOGY) WE HAVE SEEN. IMPLICIT IN HIS ALLUSION TO EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IN RELATIONS BETWEEN PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI STATES, AS WELL AS SOCIO-ECONOMIC GOALS SET FOR FORMER, IS FORMAL RECOGNITION OF AND PEACE WITH ISRAEL IN CONTEXT OF CURRENT SETTLEMENT EFFORTS AND LENGTHY, AND OPEN-MINDED, PERIOD OF NON-VIOLENT COEXISTENCE BETWEEN NEIGHBORING STATES.

4. SO FAR AS WE AWARE, HAMMAMI RETAINS CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT OF 'ARAFAT AND CO. AND HIS REMARKS BEAR CAREFUL SCRUTINY. WE HAVE FOR SOME WEEKS BEEN HEARING REPORTS OF INTELLECTUAL FERMENT WITHIN PLO AND OF DETERMINATION OF ITS MORE "MODERATE" ELEMENTS TO FIND MEANS OF SIGNALLING ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAELI STATE AND DESIRE FOR ASSOCIATION WITH SETTLEMENT PROCESS WITHOUT INCURRING WRATH OF PALESTINIAN "REJECTIONISTS" AND OTHER DIE-HARDS NEEDLESSLY OR PREMATURELY (BEIRUT 2526 AND 3344). WE INCLINED TO THINK HAMMAMI ARTICLE IS FIRST PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF THIS EFFORT AND TENTATIVE STEP IN THIS DIRECTION. FACT THAT HAMMAMI'S PROPOSALS EMBODIED IN MAGAZINE RATHER THAN ORAL REMARKS TO NEWSMEN SUGGESTS THAT THEY WERE NEITHER CARELESS NOR INADVERTENT. FURTHERMORE, BASIC LINE OF REASONING ATTRIBUTED TO HAMMAMI HAS BEGUN BE HEARD IN RECENT STATEMENTS BY PLO OFFICIALS IN OTHER PUBLIC, BUT LESS EXPOSED, FORUMS. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 03502 201704Z

FOR EXAMPLE, NABIL SHA'ATH, DIR OF PLO PLANNING CENTER, GAVE SIMILAR ANALYSIS IN PUBLIC ADDRESS TO VISITING AMERICAN JOURNALISTS EARLIER THIS MONTH IN BEIRUT. FINALLY, LOCAL REPORTS OF HAMMAMI'S ARTICLE HAVE AROUSED MORE THAN NORMAL INTEREST HERE. AMBASSADOR HAS, IN LAST TWO DAYS, BEEN ASSURED BY BOTH FONMIN TAQLA AND BRITISH AMB THAT THEY KNOW HAMMAMI'S TRIAL BALLOON WAS CAREFULLY DRAFTED WITH FOREKNOWLEDGE AND APPROVAL OF 'ARAFAT & CO.

5. ONLY DISCORDANT NOTE THUS FAR IN LOCAL REACTION TO
HAMMAMI ARTICLE WAS SOUNDED BY FATAH/BLACK SEPTEMBER
LUMINARY ABU DAOUD IN MAR 19 SPEECH AT FEDAYEEN RALLY HERE.
DESCRIBING HAMMAMI'S REMARKS RE COEXISTENCE WITH ISRAEL
AS VIOLATION OF PLO'S "ARMED STRUGGLE" POLICY-LINE, ABU
DAOUD DENOUNCED HIM AS "RAT" AND "TRAITOR".
GODLEY

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